

13

מז"ה



שם תיק: יהדות עירק

מזהה פיזי: פ-1913/29

מזהה פריט: 000lgn

כתובת: 2-109-1-4-4

תאריך הדפסה: 10/01/2017

ארכיון יצחק בן-צבי

והסמך עיני

מבנים של מלך יהודי עירק לעקלה
המלך אלכסנדר קט"ו 1936
(המבנים מלמדים על שני מבנים ממלך יהודי
מהמלך אלכסנדר).

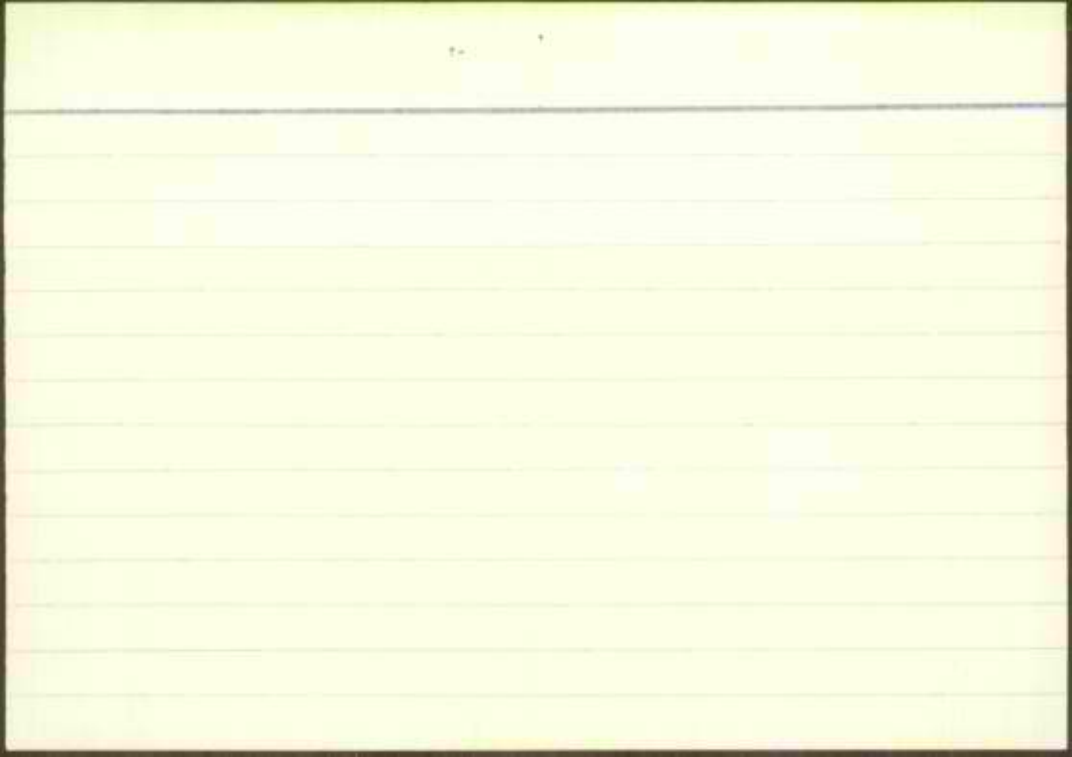
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ה. תזכיר חק' על פצולות אנטי-יהו/ציונים
הצורחין עם כחץ המאורעות האנטי-יהו

1936

מכתב אצ'וראק
(באנגלית)



'23-12'

The attached has been copied just as it was
received and not altered in any respect.

16/15-36 8-8.

CONFIDENTIAL.

Iraq during the Palestine disturbances.

+))

The following letter was received from a reliable Jewish source of Baghdad.

"...A number of times in the last ten years things were so that the Moslems of Iraq were on the verge of massacring the Jews but in all these cases the day of Judgement was postponed. The most serious one was in the summer of 1933, but few days before the massacres, the Assyrian revolt broke out, and in the same month king Faisal died. The last of their miraculous happenings was this spring when the Baghdad populace was starting to sympathise with his brothers in Palestine. In this time another internal² revolt kept him busy. The Shiite revolt of the south was at that time a very serious one. Although the newspapers in Iraq wrote almost nothing at that time about the revolt still exaggerated rumors reached Baghdad which kept the people busy with the internal problem. It is strange that the whole Arab and Moslem world tried to show its indignation of the defense action in Palestine where no more than 5-6 Arabs were killed daily while in Iraq the government which is headed by easily the most prominent personality of the Pan-Arabic movement, Jassin Pasha, Al Hashami, ordered Moslem troops to put down the revolt in the most merciless possible way. Much should be written about this revolt. Here it is suffice to mention that at least few have visioned out this contrast.

A second thing to increase this tumult was the marriage of the sister of the king and a descendant of the Prophet Muhamed to a servant. The worst of all was her conversion into Christianity. No paper even mentioned this in Iraq. No foreign paper was introduced to Iraq which mentioned the incidence. However the news were known by the majority of Iraqians.

+) ~~Though this letter was written before the recent revolt in Iraq, it is still of general interest while the effect of the events in Palestine upon the public of Iraq.~~

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This incidence with the fact to keep the imagination of the people busy= the movement to help Palestine revolt was revived. The Committee for the Aid of Palestine was already issuing "Al Manshur", a pamphlet in the evenings sold for one fils (= 1 mill) and bought by almost every man in the street and coffee shop. The editor of this pamphlet and the head of the above committee is Nuemars al Adhami, a great religious and anti-Jewish leader whose power comes from the religious societies he heads, the religious school he presides on, Arab movement extremists and other youth organisations. The pamphlet contained news of one week late extremely exaggerated and deformed. It always starts with big letters "The Grand Arabic Revolution in Palestine the Martyr". It mostly ends with: "Long lived Arabic-Palestine independent, free till eternity".

More than once I tried to find out the kind of people who buy the pamphlet. Always I found men of all positions, Moslems or Christians, boys till the age of 13, porters, shop keepers and every man who happens to pass by the newspaper boy. . It was bought even by Jews but to less extend. It was issued just at sunset and sold by all sellers running in the streets and calling: "Al Manshur" only. They usually stand in busy corners. Usually they are so busy that they have a crowd around them. Those who sell while passing through the streets and were stopped at every shop by every street passer-by.

2. Turning Point of the Second half of June.

When the Shiite revolt in the south was dealt with, Baghdadian populace had to be kept busy. Very gradually and systematically also Palestine started to take the place of the Iraq as the immediate issue. The factors were the following:

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- 1) End of Iraqi revolt.
- 2) The exaggerated news of the sympathy strike of Beirut in June 1935 23 (?) arranged by the merchants.
- 3) The Palestine Supreme Committee delegate Muin Al-Madhi.
- 4) The increased activity of Al-Muthana Club.

It was felt in Palestine and abroad that during the month of June the Arab movement and disturbances in Palestine were weakened, Muin Al Madhi was sent to Baghdad for propoganda work. This was a great success. Personally I believed that the prolongation of the disturbances in Palestine and the new Pan-Arabic phase was due to a great extent this visit. This man was received very heartly. He met high personalities and he spoke in many arabic meetings. His speech at Al Muthna Club was among the most important one. It was attended by all the great personalities of the Pan-Arabic movement, and the representatives of Yemen and Ibn Al Saud. All his speeches were published in the most important papers of Iraq. He came to Iraq just at a moment when people needed something to keep them busy. He also encouraged the collections of the money for the help of Palestine. Two things kept his work ~~more~~ more or less lasting: 1) His being one of the men who were with Faisel in the Arab Revolution and 2) his very early nomination to the secretarship of the Arab Supreme Council with ~~the~~ final exile to Sarafand.

The appointed date for the Beirut demonstration was published in the papers about 20 days before, so Baghdad wanted to make a similar demonstration on the same day as Beirut was doing. A program was made, everything was schedu~~l~~ed to march in a demonstration after the prayer in the mosque of Hardarkhanah. Everybody was prepared for the second day and the Jews fear increased. The shrewed Hacham Sassoon, the president of the Jewish Committee in Baghdad went to the prime minister Jassin Pasha El Hashami for an interview the night before the scheduled strike. The words he told the prime minister, as was circulating when I was in Baghdad, were these: "Your Highness, only a few days ago that the south revolt (shiite) was suppressed. ^{There} ~~there~~ are many discontented Shiite in

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Baghdad. The demonstration instead of letting the people to think of an outside enemy and forget the internal conflict, these discontented will have an opportunity to show the enmity against the government which will end in a massacre". The only known thing was that the second day (morning of supposed demonstration) all the daily papers appeared to the effect that the government has seen it more appropriate to cancel the demonstration to which the government previously has given its acceptance and legalized it.

The last week of June was characterized by letters of thanks and appreciations which the "big" men of Palestine including the different women organisations sent to the "Big" men of Iraq. This was not without an encouragement to increase the movement.

On the other hand the sympathy which Iraq has shown to the High Committee delegate and the excellent reception he was accorded gave a moral encouragement and a push to the disturbances in Palestine.

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From the beginning of the Palestine disturbances till the end of June only 26 ^{num} ~~num~~bers of the "Manshur" of the Palestine Aid Committee were issued while from July 3rd to July 21st 11 ^{nu} ~~num~~bers were issued. It means that 26 numbers appeared in 73 days while in July 11 appeared in 18 days. This may reflex upon the interest of the buyers who happen to be also those concerned in the Palestine affairs.

One could feel that the interest ~~whom~~ shown in Palestine was increasing from the articles ~~of~~ the papers also. My impression is that these articles increased even in the mild papers to shown their "nationalism". Superficially one can hardly detect the increased feeling except from the crowds ~~lying~~ buying the "Manshurs", the activity of the branches of the Palestine Aid Committee in the different Liva (districts) and from interest shown by the people in caffees when the radio is opened on Palestine. Besides that one can hardly feel the real tension. There were no intense feelings in the streets. The moslem passer-by shows nothing special to-

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The Subcommittee in the Livas showed some increased activity in the Northern Livas. The work in the Liva is mostly done by government officials *here and* their friends to show their nationalism or at least their names to appear in Baghdad papers. In general, beside Mosul, the other towns and villages can show no interest in the problem since they mostly can not read or write. It is the administrative offer and the local Baghdadian clerks appointed in ~~there~~ for places who read papers and followed of the news of Palestine. This is important since one makes a big mistake to speak about Iraqi sympathy for the Arabs of Palestine. It is really mainly the populace of Baghdad and Mosul where those illiterate can easily hear from Caffee radio or people reading papers in ~~caffee~~ about Palestine.

In this connection one should mention the lack of interest of the souther districts (shiits) of Iraq especially Basrah. I did not hear of a single demonstration or of any interest Barsah has shown in Palestine disturbances. If there was money collected it was little and done by government officials there. This is in contra-distinctions of the over-activity of Mosul - Surnite - and the greater amount of money collected. While Baghdad was kept busy with the southern revolt in the early months Mosul was very active in public meeting in ~~Mosul~~ and the Young Moslem Association. A demonstration where Jews were being hurt occurred in September while deputies from the Beduin tribes around showed sympathy and financial help. Among those present was Audjel
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by hundreds into coffee houses, casinos and private houses. One can hardly pass anywhere in Baghdad without hearing the loud voice of a radio. Almost all coffee houses, which are very many in Baghdad open-air, got a big radio either bought or for a trial. Since the idea is that the voice should be heard at the other ends of the big place where there is much noise from people the voice was put as high as possible. Also since most of the people do not know foreign languages Palestine and Egypt were turned on when Baghdad program was on the air. There were also the shops selling radios which in order to attract a crowd put on the highest voice from the same 3 places. When Baghdad station is working: thursday evening and monday evening with no exception all ^{keys} Keys(?) in Baghdad are turned on Baghdad. Otherwise they get the news of Palestine and Egypt in the first place. When no news were on Koran= dancing and singing program were turned on.

One could feel that people showed an increase interest both Jews and Moslems when the time from Palestine news was nearing. People either come in the beginning of the evening to occupy the seats around the radio or later during the news program got near to hear the news. Although one of the most important part of the Baghdad program was home and foreign news still no mention was made of Palestine as far as I know.

No incidence ever happened when news from Palestine were heard nor any feeling was shown as far as I know at least in the biggest and most important such public places which naturally frequented Jews and educated Moslems.

Baghdad papers hardly appeared without some small article about Palestine in the months of August and September. The Al-Alam-Arabi boycotted the Jews since 1932 and was closed in the middle of July - always had something about Palestine and always had some mentions of Palestine in its opening article whatever the subject may be. Al-Tariq which is more or less read by Jews started in later weeks to publish some articles with a mild tone. Al-Bilad, the government paper =

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Al-Bilad, the government paper +) now and then published articles but mostly translated from British papers speaking in favour of the Arabs such as the Daily Mail. It also alluded to the most important events with now and then a mild tone articles. Baghdad Times used to publish in the English section Reuter News and every week a complete copy of the Palestine radio news program. No articles offered in the Arabic section, ~~except~~ Al-Sabah is a complete fascist paper paid by Germany and Italy very openly, appearing once a week now on Sunday and giving a German point of view about Palestine.

The government position as is shown by its action and individual communications was this:

1) Higher officials - they are ^{hats} ~~are~~ and would like to help Palestine but they were in no position to increase the feeling of Iraqians against Jews of Baghdad. Those found in the government, especially the prime minister, Jassin Pasha El Hashami, are the trouble makers in such disturbed days, but since they have now responsibilities of the positions they hold and since they want no new problems which may trouble them, they kept quite and did not give hand or way to others to move. This is felt and seen. Naeaman Al Adhami whose power is great on the extremists and reactionaries among the populace of Baghdad, was always an instrument in the hands of the prime minister to cause an ^{embarrassment} ~~embarrassment~~ to previous ministers. I believe that there is much proof to the statement which circulated around September in Baghdad that Jassin Al Hashami told his favour Jam Al Darzi the poker partner in the Jewish Al Rashid Club: "As long as I am in power government - there is no few (view?) for the future of the Jews".

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men and women - moslem - is a government official. This either have a grudge against a jew in their departments or want to build a nationalistic form at the expense of the Jews or they are simply haters of Jews and promoters of Pan-Arabism.

The Commission for Aid of Palestine showed its activity also by issuing a lottery and by patronizing one of the evenings that Jussuf Bey Wahbi played in Baghdad. I don't know anything about the income of the lottery but I know that the Wahbi play was quite well attended and that most of the tickets were sent to the most important men of Baghdad as a help to Palestine."

W.A.

Blatz

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222/25

W.A.

1936
Following Confidential Report on the Anti-Jewish Movement in Iraq was received from Baghdad.

There is no denying that a period of terrorism had been experienced here reminiscent of mediaeval persecutions. As I informed you in a previous letter there was no spontaneous interest in events in Palestine. But feelings can be worked up. That was done through articles in the local Arabic press bespeaking of wholesale slaughter of Arabs, men, women and children, by speeches and propaganda by the organisation which styled itself Society for the Defence of Palestine (Arabs, of course), by other mischievous organisations to whose ranks came all riff-raff athirst for terrorism.

It had ceased to become Arab in character. It assumed a religious significance. "Help your Moslem brothers", cried they, and a situation had developed such as existed in the days of the Crusades.

Public opinion, worked up by feelings, was recruited to their side.

Yasin el Hashimi and his Government allowed it. They did not perhaps realise the serious consequences entailed. They wanted public opinion on their side and that was one way of recruiting it.

But it grew into a monster and could no longer be controlled.

About 11 p.m. on the eve of the Jewish New Year, two Jews, Zughayer and Hoori were going home from the Zamra Club, a Jewish social club. They walked in the main street. Revolver shots rang out. Zughayer was taken to hospital where he died a few hours later, and Hoori was grazed on the forehead. The murderer escaped.

I have no doubt that the Government did not want this to happen. This is my opinion. They could have stopped it. They could have tracked down the murderer, arrested and convicted him. It was a clear case that the murders were arranged by an organisation in Baghdad who thought that the Zamra Club was the hot bed of Zionism - first, revolver shots in the air over the Club, then assaults on members, and after that a few men created a row - and of course one must draw the conclusions that "religious" men were ~~also~~ members of the Organisation. It would have been easy to track it down and bring out the murderer. But that would have involved the Hashimi Government the risk of being unpopular, and connected with it their downfall. They took precautions, however. The streets were patrolled by armed police to whose strength was added 400 plain clothes men.

This did not improve matters.

As it happened, about that time, Abraham Hayim, Deputy for Baghdad, had just returned from a trip to Palestine. He was attacked by one of the local periodicals as being a Zionist. He was afraid that such an attack might prejudice his position, and wanted to save his own skin. Abraham Hayim got Abraham el Kebir to side with him. Salim el Kebir was on their side, and they wrangled Ezra Daniel to agree with them. Abraham el Kebir is a railway official and his brother Salim an Advocate.

Ezra (Menahem) Daniel you will probably recognise as one of the richest Jews in Iraq.

They held a meeting attended by the head of the Community, Khakham Sasson Kadourie, two Rabbies and some members of the Lay Council. It was at this meeting that they decided to declare in the press that the Iraqi Jews have nothing to do with Zionism. When it was moved that it would not be the right thing to do, because of Jewish world opinion, Salman el Kebir stated emphatically that he could not allow Jewish world opinion to influence his actions. He has got to think of himself.

The "declaration" appeared in the press. Before the papers were on the streets two hours on the first day of Soccot another Jew was shot dead in broad daylight. The murderer was stopped and arrested by a Jewish policeman. A few days later a third Jew was stabbed to death as he was about to knock at his brother's door in a side street. The Bagdah death was not murder. I have it from a reliable source (a Basrahwi) who was in the port city at the time that a man had died a natural death. He lived in a house by himself and his death was not discovered until three days afterwards.

In the meantime, attacks encouraged by the Cabinet's negative attitude took place. Jews were molested. There was a panic. Business was seriously affected. Jews would not give credit.

Then came two further murders - the Jewish doctor's assistant in Baghdad and that of a clerk on the Latifiyah Estate Ltd., outside Baghdad. These, as you will gather, were not the act of terrorists. They were rather encouraged in the atmosphere which prevailed at the time.

That just about capped it all. Panic became wild. Jews became afraid of their shadows. In terror shops and business firms run by Jews pulled down their shutters and locked up their doors. There was a self-imposed curfew. No Jew ventured outside his home after sunset - a good many stayed at home during the daytime as well.

That seriously arrested business dealings. All dealings were stopped, including the banks. The Customs took in only about £P.70 - usually the figure is £27,000 and up daily.

Decent thinking Moslems were shocked. There was nothing though they could do about it. The Hashimi Cabinet was despotic. This time the Government approached the Jewish Community with a request to the head of the community to publish in the press that all is really well and that everyone should go back to work. Members of the Lay Council retorted with a request for a Government communique on which to base their own. This came out in the local press and under the signature of the former Head of the Press and Propaganda, making vague statements about mischievous makers and that the Government will all do what they can to preserve peace and order.

The Head of the Jewish Community published this communique. Jews returned to their occupations. But the same conditions prevailed. The curfew remained. Business was restricted.

Then Thursday a fortnight ago the Hashimi Cabinet fell. The old order changed. The self-imposed curfew was lifted. I saw Jews in the street at 12 midnight that Thursday.

There were no Jewish Government officials killed, by the way. Your informant evidently meant the Latifiyah Estate murder. But that is a public company - not a Government Department. It was, of course, very hot for Jewish officials in Government service. They did not know what would happen next. And they were very much afraid.

But that is all over. The new Government have been officially declared that would make no distinction between races and creeds in the country, and the Prime Minister, Hikmet Suleiman, had assured Mr. Anthony Eden that the protection and welfare of the minorities had been included from the first in his programme of policy, and had himself visited representative members of the Jewish community and gave them his assurances that the Jews would be fully protected as well as other minorities.

Proof of this statement is already being seen. Jewish Government officials no longer wear a strained and haunted look. That has given place to beaming faces - which shows that Hikmet's statement was not empty words.

In fact, there is no reason for a recrudescence of those unpleasant events. The former Cabinet was only interested in filling up its own purse, camouflaging their misdeeds under a spurious interest in the case of the Palestine Arabs, thus diverting attention from themselves. Hikmet wants to "make" the country. He will not tie himself up in outside questions. In fact, his statement clearly shows that. He said that his Government will help all they can the Palestine Arabs in so far as is possible and desirable. The statement is qualified, and reading between the lines, it is important.

There was no question, by the way, of a Bakir Sidki dictatorship. All Bakir Sidki did was to overthrow the Hashimi Cabinet. There his work ended, and Hikmet's began. The conscription question did not come into it, either.

Ja'far Pasha el Askeri was killed through his own fault. How he met his death is not, nor is ever likely to be disclosed. But this much is known. He had gone down Baqubah way to meet the oncoming Army and as Minister of Defence to make a rift among the officers. He was shot and buried in the desert.